

**What is enterovirus?**

Nonpolio enteroviruses are responsible for many illnesses in infants and children. People infected with enteroviruses can have respiratory, rash-like, neurologic, gastrointestinal and cardiac symptoms.

Who is at risk for enterovirus?

Infants and children are most at risk. Mothers may transmit the virus to their infants during pregnancy. People with compromised immune systems are also at risk.

What are the symptoms of enterovirus?

Respiratory symptoms can resemble those of the common cold. Gastrointestinal symptoms may include vomiting, diarrhea, abdominal pain and hepatitis. Other symptoms may be rash, eye infection and cardiac and neurologic symptoms, including aseptic meningitis, encephalitis and paralysis.

How soon do symptoms appear?

Symptoms usually appear three to six days after exposure. Acute eye infections may occur within 24 to 72 hours after exposure.

How is enterovirus spread?

Enteroviruses can spread through fecal-oral (fecally contaminated food, water, hands or surfaces touched by objects or hands put into the mouth), by direct or close contact with mouth or nose secretions or from mother to infant during pregnancy. Enteroviruses can survive on environmental surfaces for long periods of time, allowing transmission by touching objects and then exposing the eyes, nose or mouth.

When and for how long is a person able to spread the disease?

The virus can be shed in the stools for several weeks after onset of infection. Shedding through respiratory droplets usually is limited to about one week. The virus can be passed to others without signs of illness.

How is a person diagnosed?

A laboratory test of throat or stool samples, and possibly from blood and urine if taken during early onset of the disease, can determine if the virus is present.

What is the treatment?

No specific treatment is available. Immune globulin intravenous has been used in life-threatening infections of infants.

Does past infection make a person immune?

No.

Should children or others be excluded from day care, school, work or other activities if they have enterovirus?

Yes, if the child has a fever or is unable to participate and the staff determines that they cannot care for the child without compromising their ability to care for the health and safety of the other children in the group.

What can be done to prevent the spread of enterovirus?

Good hand washing, especially after diaper changing.

Additional Information:

For additional information, call the North Dakota Department of Health at 800.472.2180.

Resource: American Academy of Pediatrics. [Children In Out-of-Home Child Care]. In: Pickering LK, ed. Red Book: 2003 Report of the Committee on Infectious Diseases. 26th ed. Elk Grove Village, IL: American Academy of Pediatrics; 2003:[123-127, 269-270].

